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Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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8/28/2007

Meeting Called to Order at 7:05 pm by the chair, Dr. John Williamson. A quorum was declared.

Faculty Senate Minutes 8/28/07

Williamson began with opening remarks:

A photo will be made by the stairs, by 7:30 to take photo while there is still light. Not sure yet what photo will be used for, but everyone will get a copy.

Motion to approve minutes from last meeting made by Martin. Motion seconded by Dr. Robert Albritton. Show of hands -- all approved.

Williamson then updated Senate on "what's been going on over the summer."

Smoking ban resolution went before EMC, which includes Andy Mullins, Pete Boone, Vice Chancellors, Provost, and Faculty Senate Chair. Williamson pushed for total ban, but no other members approved the idea. Chancellor stated no opinion on the matter. The committee ultimately recommended a compromise to allow smoking in designated areas, with a slow move toward a total ban. The Smoking Board will look over the committee recommendations.

Regarding enrollment, preliminary data shows that current student numbers are less than 1% different than last year, which was in the range of 15,000 +, including 13,000 + on Oxford campus. New faculty hires included 35 new tenure track and 32 new non-tenure track, made up of temporary hires and instructors. Twenty-six tenured faculty have left over the past year, which includes retirees. This leaves a difference of 9 new tenure track positions at the University. However, because the time period is not accurate (count of faculty members who left goes back further than count of new hires), the number of new tenure positions may actually be more than 9, according to Eftink. We should expect that the numbers will increase significantly as we move toward the 2008-09 year. This is due to tuition increase, of which the majority will go to new faculty hires. John will push for new tenure track hires.

Regarding standing committees, the listing of membership has gone to IT and will be online in 48 hours. It is important, both for the faculty and for the University, that people let John know if a standing committee is not meeting very often or if committee members feel that their representation is being trumped. As a side note, John talked to the Provost about compensation or recognition for University service on committees. A suggestion was the possibility to take service into account for merit raises or tenure reviews. The Provost is looking for ideas and input on identifying and recognizing service.

The Chancellor recommended that two faculty members be appointed to the Executive Board of the Foundation. In considering who it would be, they were looking first, for someone with a finance background. Thus, they decided that Dr. Larry Cox would be a good selection. It was also important to select someone to represent the College of Liberal Arts because of its size. For this, they selected Dr. Joe Ward. These faculty members will be non-voting members of the Board, and will provide a faculty perspective. However, for the sake of the privacy of the meetings, they will not report to the Faculty Senate regarding these meetings.

Incidentally, Williamson discovered that gifts given to the University without a designation as to how the money should be sent are not put into a pool, but rather, the donator is contacted and a request is made that they specify where the money should go.

Regarding gender equity, a study was conducted looking for potential gender inequity on campus. The resulting findings were that the majority of the pay gap is located in University staff positions. Therefore, Larry Sparks recommended that

the money to close the gap should go to staff positions, specifically the janitorial staff. The Provost created a separate pot to go to faculty members, and is relying on department chairs and deans for information on where gender inequity may exist. Mary Harrington, who runs Institutional Research, informed Williamson that salary data is easy to obtain. The Faculty Senate Finance Committee is looking at a resolution to recommend that gender inequality is a problem in most areas and should be looked at annually.

When it comes to salary compression and gender inequities, the general method is to rely on department chairs to relay information to the dean, who relays the information to the provost, in order for adjustments to be made. It is recommended that Carolyn look at those lying noticeably outside of the norm and ask deans to explain those. This raises the issue of finances needed in order to make these comparisons within departments.

The Chancellor is aware that by the time raises were given to make the University of Mississippi wages more competitive, the new SUG averages came in showing that the University of Mississippi dropped again to below average. No department in the University was above the SUG average.

On the subject of Productivity vs. Merit: a faculty member may be productive and useful, but might not be considered meritorious. The value of faculty members should include things such as service and teaching in addition to their research program.

During meetings with various administrators over the summer, several expressed to Williamson an interest in coming to talk to the Faculty Senate. According to Williamson, Professor Watson recommended that this might not be a productive way for the Senate to spend its limited working time. Williamson recommends that if there is interest, administrators can come in early and talk with those who would like to meet with them.

Group Photo taken at 7:30.

Meeting reconvened at 7:45. Williamson discussed his meeting with Pete Boone, the University Athletic Director. Surprisingly, sports programs very rarely break even. Aside from football and men's basketball, all other programs operate in the red and rely on SEC kickbacks.

Williams reported on a meeting with the Associate Provost, Dr. Eftink, who stated that he is concerned about the upcoming SACS review. He would like faculty support in getting things ready for this. As an example, he needs CVs, resumes, and course syllabi uploaded at some point soon. Specifically, he asks that courses that include grad and undergrad students state what extra work is required of the grad students.

The Faculty Senate has been asked to look over a document put together by an undergraduate named Shad White, which addresses problems with the cost of textbooks. Though the Senate is reluctant to fully back the document, it would be wise to give input as the students will be taking this issue to the legislature.

The meeting was turned over Professor Jay Watson to discuss Faculty Governance.

The Faculty Governance Committee has already met this semester to work on shared governance and revisions to the Senate's constitution and by-laws. Senate owes a debt to Professor Robert Albritton for coming up with the new draft over the summer. Three major changes have been made: 1) Departments will elect representatives to Faculty Senate, 2) Change the legislative year to run from August to August, and 3) The term of office should be one year rather than two, with the possibility to serve four consecutive years.

The committee is still deliberating over a formula for representation. One possible model is that each academic department would be represented by one faculty member. This would follow the U.S. Senate model. The second possible model is to allow one additional senator for larger departments. The issue would then be to discuss how we define a large department.

Williamson called for a show of hands regarding these models. The one-to-one model had 17 votes, while the one-to-two model had 12-13 votes. Later Williamson called for a show of hands to determine who felt strongly on the issue. Four members voted that they felt strongly about one model or the other. The Governance Committee will have a

motion to vote on by the next session.

The issue was raised that 7-9 pm is late for a meetings and is difficult for faculty members who have children to get out of the home at 7:00. In response, it was stated that it would also be unfair for the meetings to be held during class times.

Other parts of the constitution were discussed and small changes were suggested. This included that the chair elect should be changed to vice chair.

Williamson recommended that members look at the website to see who is on the Faculty Governance Committee if there is an interest in giving input before the next committee meeting regarding the representative models.

Williamson called for new business, but no new business was raised.

The meeting was closed at 8:50 pm.